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# ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

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SEPT. AND OCT., 1847.  
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## A GRAND INCONSISTENCY;

OR, FOOD TO IRELAND, AND DEATH TO MEXICO.

THE contrast between our kindness to Ireland, and our malice to Mexico, is a startling commentary on the real savageism of war, and the strange violence which it does to the spontaneous, unperverted dictates of our nature. Towards the former, we act ourselves; while towards the latter, we put on the tiger to execute the bloody, vindictive behests of war. God forbid we should undervalue the generosity of our people to their famishing brethren in the green isle; but we cannot refrain from holding it up as a mirror to reflect the grim and ghastly features of war, as a very demon revelling in crime, and blood, and tears.

Our war in Mexico, and the famine in Ireland, have put us before the world in an attitude of the most glaring inconsistency. We have been trying, on one hand, to kill men, and, on the other, to save them. We have given, in all, several hundred thousand dollars to arrest starvation and death on the other side of the Atlantic; while we have been squandering from our national treasury scores on scores of millions to slay or make wretched the sons and daughters of Mexico, to bombard and sack her cities, burn her villages, and lay waste her harvest-fields. Congress voted two of our public ships to transport food for the famishing in Ireland and Scotland; while the Executive despatches nearly all the rest to carry death and devastation along the coasts of Mexico. The tale of Ireland's woes has touched a chord of sympathy through the nation, and prompted us to weep and pray for her perishing sons and daughters; while every report of death or suffering from Mexico, of a city cap-

tured, or a victory won, at a loss to her of hundreds or thousands of lives, is hastened from city to city by our lightning couriers, eagerly announced in our papers as *glorious news*! and made a matter of national rejoicing, of devout thanksgiving to the Father of all!

Strange, revolting inconsistency! And how can we account for such alternation or conjunction of hatred with love, of malice with benevolence, of the demon with the angel? It is attributable to the brutalizing, demonizing influence of war; a custom which belongs not so much to this age, as to that of a by-gone barbarism. It is a foul, most loathsome excrescence, left by other times on the bosom of a semi-christian civilization. It is hardly a part of our present character, but a piece of the exuviae of an almost obsolete barbarism still clinging to us in shreds. The mere civilization of this age, to say nothing of its Christianity, has in fact outgrown the brutality and demonism of war. We keep the name; but most of the reality is effaced from our personal, individual character. In response to poor Ireland begging for bread, we act ourselves, as civilized, Christian men; but, when the demon-voice of war, that hoary devil descended to us from past ages of barbarism and blood, calls us to fight our republican neighbors, to hate those whom we should love, to kill those whom we ought to save, to overwhelm with all sorts of misery a people whom we should ever strive to make prosperous and happy, then we put on a character not strictly our own as individuals, and gird ourselves for a work, against which, all our better feelings, if allowed to speak out, would protest aloud, as an outrage upon our nature.

This inconsistency, however, is no new thing; and, I remember a case so much in point, I cannot refrain from quoting the substance of it. It was an incident connected with the destruction of the Turkish fleet in the bay of Navarino nearly thirty years ago.

After the firing had ceased, the English Admiral, Sir Edward Codrington, sent a lieutenant to offer any medical assistance that might be wanted. The only physician on board the ship to which he went, was the first man killed in the action; and, as the dead had not been thrown overboard, nor the wounded removed to the cock-pit, the decks presented a most horrible scene of gore and mangled bodies. Some dozen Turkish officers sat in the cabin upon their crimsoned ottomans, alternately sipping their coffee, and smoking their pipes. They ordered ottomans and coffee for the lieutenant; but he declined them, saying, "I come, with the Admiral's compliments, to offer assistance." "We need none," coolly replied the Turk. "But shall not our surgeons attend to your

wounded?" "No," answered the Turk with perfect *sang-froid*, "wounded men want no assistance; they'll die soon."

Baffled in this mission of mercy, the lieutenant returned, and reported its failure to the Admiral, when Sir Edward sent him back to bring with him, if possible, the Turkish Secretary. The lieutenant went, and brought him and several others to the Admiral; and, after being closeted with the Secretary for a long time, Sir Edward ordered the same lieutenant to take him and his companions ashore. On their way, they came near the wreck of a mast, on which some score of wounded or exhausted Turks were endeavoring to save themselves. "Those poor fellows," said the lieutenant anxiously, "I must certainly rescue." "Poh!" retorted the Turk, "never mind them; they are only common soldiers, and will soon die, if you'll let them alone." "I can't let them alone," said the lieutenant; "I *must* save them, if possible; and if I don't try, I should disgrace the service." So he pulled for the rescue of the poor wretches; and when they were all carefully stowed away in the bottom of the boat, the Turk, after a short pause, burst into a fit of immoderate laughter. "What's the matter?" cried the lieutenant. "Laugh! Good Heavens! what is here to laugh at?" "Laugh!" retorted the Turk in bitter sarcasm, "laugh! by Allah! you English are a queer people. Why, yesterday, while we were quietly drinking our coffee, you came, and knocked our ships to pieces, and killed or mangled all our men, till our fleet is one vast slaughter-house; but, this morning, you pretend to be so humane you cannot pass a score of wounded soldiers without taking all this trouble to save these few victims of your own cruelty!"

This illustration may suffice for the present; but not a few akin to it have already occurred in the progress of our war with Mexico, and, from these and others likely to arise, we may furnish still further commentaries on the bloody and barbarous inconsistencies of war. Indeed, there is hardly a point in the whole custom, that does not find its counterpart in our present conflict; and it would be alike instructive and amusing to go through all the details of its history, and learn from it what war really is—a compound of suicidal folly, crimes and woes, a contradiction of common sense and common honesty, a foul stigma alike upon the Christianity and civilization of the age. We have no disposition to exhaust our indignation upon the present war; for, bad as it confessedly is, it is no worse than half the wars waged even by nations reputedly Christian, and may well be put by the side of that by France, in Algeria, and those by England, in China and Hindostan.